

ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS

Envision St. John's Municipal Plan

Our goal is to conserve, protect and enhance the City's natural environment – its waterways, wetlands, coastline and forested areas – for their ecological function, aesthetic and economic value.



Landforms, watercourses and coastline serve important ecological functions within the City and the broader regional ecosystem. Our citizens recognize the importance of the natural environment for its amenity, ecological and recreational values and the contribution that natural areas make to health and quality of life.

Over the years, the City has done much to identify and protect important waterways, wetlands and natural areas which support healthy populations of fish, birds and mammals. Since Hurricane Igor in 2010, considerable effort has also been spent studying the hydrology of the City's watersheds and major river systems and their capacity to safely accommodate storm water runoff. As climate change promises to bring shorter, more intense storms, protecting the City's river systems for their hydrologic function becomes even more important.

Forested lands within the City provide wildlife habitat, amenity space and opportunities for recreation and resource use. Forest management, in rural areas and within the built up areas of the City are recognized as an important component of a healthy city environment. A healthy urban forest will be more resilient to the effects of climate change which are expected to bring longer, drier summers, and increased risk of damage from forest insects and disease.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES ON ENVIRONMENTAL SYSTEMS:

- Protect the City's public water supply watersheds to ensure a safe, clean and reliable source of drinking water.
- Protect the hydrologic functions of waterways and wetlands as a critical component of the City's stormwater management system.
- Establish a city-wide parks and open space system that protects and enhances natural heritage, hydrologic functions, biodiversity and visual amenity.
- Improve the City's urban forest through best management practices and incorporation of green infrastructure in public spaces and private developments. Manage development to reduce risk in hazard areas

ENVIRONMENTALLY VALUABLE AREAS

- The policies from the current municipal plan are retained.
- We will identify, protect, maintain, and enhance important elements or features of the natural environment including lands and waters to support natural resources; ecologically vulnerable lands and waters; physically unstable lands; valuable landscape features; environmentally valuable areas; lands required for storm water management; and other lands or waters considered environmentally significant by Council.
- The plan recommends a study to define more precisely the edges of wetlands in the Goulds an updating the 1993 Significant Waterways and Wetlands Study.

OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

- This plan will identify important ecological and natural areas with the intention that new development be made to fit around and link to these areas. It will also ensure that recreation usage within the open space system is managed to minimize environmental impacts and preserve ecological integrity.
- The plan encourages the retention of natural features, including hilltops that are not included in environmentally valuable areas or in the Open Space System Plan.

URBAN FOREST

- Envision will protect and expand the urban forest in existing City neighbourhoods and integrate it into new neighbourhoods as they are planned and developed, consistent with the City's Urban Forest Plan.
- We will enhance the urban forest through tree planting and landscaping on public lands and ensure a healthy forest cover within protected water supply areas.

WATER SYSTEMS

- We will continue to work with the province and other municipalities on stormwater management
- A new policy on groundwater is included, and a regional groundwater model that states that, where unserviced development is approved, groundwater quality and quantity are ensured.

CLIMATE CHANGE, HAZARDS AND FLOODPLAINS

- The City recognizes that the impacts of climate change are already occurring.
- Envision retains existing policies to keep development out of floodways and to design structures to withstand storm surges
- Land use reports and possibly conservation plans will be required for proposed development that may be considered in an environmentally valuable area, designated waterbody buffer or flood plain or within a required buffer around a designated waterbody or floodplain.

BROWNFIELDS

- There is a new policy on identifying, cleaning up and seeking redevelopment on brownfield sites, which are vacant sites or sites known or suspected to be contaminated.